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THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

MISSIONS

The Passing of S. G. Wilson and Andrew Watson

The foreign missionary staff has been weakened by the passing of two respected and courageous missionaries. S. G. Wilson was one of the ablest of the all too small band of missionaries devoted to the work of the Moslems. He died in Tabriz, Persia, on Sunday, July 2, 1916. He was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania, in 1858, and spent thirty years in tireless and energetic service to the work of the Christian Missions in Tabriz. His primary work was the development of work for boys. He began with Armenians, but later was able to get in touch with Moslem boys, and, at the time of his death, of the three hundred boys in the school one-half were Mohammedans. The school had become the largest missionary school in Western Persia, and the most respected and influential institution in Tabriz. In addition to the educational interests he was an able evangelist preacher. But the last work in which he was engaged was the distribution of relief to the Armenians and Syrians. At first he made his headquarters in Tiflis, in the Caucasus, where he purchased and distributed supplies in behalf of the Red Cross Society. The American Consul viewed his energy with surprise and pride, and in one of his despatches he reported that, in his judgment, a more superior man for the task could not have been found.

Dr. Andrew Watson, who has been described as "the Nestor of the American Mission in Egypt," died in his home in Cairo, December 9, 1916. Notwithstanding the fact that he was eighty-three years of age, he conducted the English service in the Mission church on Sunday evening, November 26. Dr. Watson was a Scotchman by birth, but went from America to Egypt in 1861.

He has spent fifty-five years in Egypt, and at the time of his death he was one of the oldest foreign residents, and probably he was the oldest resident missionary in Africa. On his arrival in Egypt there were only six members of the embryo native Protestant church. At the present time there is a native Protestant community of 30,000-40,000 members, containing over 13,000 communicants. In 1864 he helped to establish the Mission Theological Seminary—the oldest school of Protestant theology in Egypt. In 1892 he was made the head of the institution. When in America in 1897 Dr. Watson was chosen the moderator of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian church.

Revolution and Religion in Russia

Rev. William Fetter has written in the *Missionary Review of the World* for May an informing article on some interesting aspects of the present upheaval in Russia. He was pastor of "Dom Evangelia" Church, Petrograd, when the war was declared in August, 1914. The description which he gives of the multitude which assembled at the time the emperor proclaimed the imperial manifesto is strikingly suggestive of the radical change that has come since then. Mr. Fetter writes feelingly of the significance of the prohibition of vodka for the people of Russia, and he appears to be hopeful, if not confident, that the measure will be retained even after peace shall be made. Indeed, he says that the Holy Synod, which has always been noted for its reactionary tendencies, has asked to have the vodka prohibition made permanent, and like requests have been made by town councils and important societies. One of the conspicuous things which accompanied the early years of the war was the demand made by the sol-

diers for the Bible. Mr. Fetler says: "While Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaivetch was inspecting a part of his army and was inquiring of the conditions and needs of the men, some one of them asked for a Bible, or New Testament. The Duke immediately made an order for several cartloads of Bibles to be sent to the camps for distribution. Within two weeks after the beginning of the war the demand for Bibles was so great that the printing offices of the Holy Synod were not able to meet the demands." But at the

outbreak of the war there was inaugurated a campaign against all who were not of the Russian Orthodox church. This campaign was directed against sectarians, among whom were the Baptists and Mr. Fetler himself. Like the others Mr. Fetler was attacked on the charge of being a German, although he says he is not, and was eventually exiled. But Mr. Fetler thinks the Revolution has introduced a state of affairs which will correct these abuses of religious rights.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Minister and the Sunday School

The efficiency of the Sunday school depends upon the leadership of the minister. Such, in brief, is the position taken by Franklin McElfresh in an article in the *Homiletic Review* for June. But he recognizes that the work of the Sunday school has been radically changed during the last few years, and that this fact has necessitated a readjustment on the part of a great body of American ministers. It is precisely for the benefit of ministers who have been forced to make this adjustment, without the benefit of guidance that some others have had, that the writer has made the following suggestions. At the outset he understands that the work of the Sunday school is one of the essential things in the work of the modern minister, and for himself he is convinced that "the ministers who falter by the way will find alert travellers who have studied the guide boards outpacing them in the race." Four books each year should be read and inwardly digested. These books should be of the kind that deal with the science of religious education; and he thinks that the minister who does not perform this task is seriously at fault, inasmuch as he is not attending to the work of the study as he ought. The books which he names for initial study are the following: H. H. Horne, *Psychological Principles of Education*; John McCunn, *The Making of*

Character; G. A. Coe, *Religion in Education and Morals*; W. S. Athearn, *The Church School*. As for the matter of conventions and institutes, he is of the opinion that no educator is alive who does not keep in touch with the discussions of the great educational leaders. Indeed, nowhere is there such opportunity for the fellowship of Christian workers in the study of great and pressing problems, and the minister who misses the Sunday-school convention of the right type is a loser. The *Sunday School Monthly* is a remarkable source of information for those who are endeavoring to adopt the graded system, and, if read a little more earnestly, would save many ministers the embarrassments which sometimes overtake them in their efforts to rearrange their schools. The public school has "caught the breeze of the aeroplane" and is moving fast these days. For this very reason it is necessary that the minister watch the progress of these schools, so that he may be able to keep his own Sunday school abreast of the changing methods of education. Mr. McElfresh tells his readers of the splendid progress that is being made in religious education by those churches which are able to command the services of specialists in religious education, but he is familiar with the fact that "nine hundred and ninety-nine churches in the thousand" have one minister only, and it is with full